

OBSERVATIONS

Of the Case ON THE *1172. g. g.*
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STATE of the DISPUTE

BETWEEN

A Physician and an Apothecary,

CONCERNING

A PRESCRIPTION of SYDENHAM,

IN WHICH

A Vindication of this AUTHOR's Character, as
Scholar, is attempted:

AND

His Method of curing the Dysentery by Injections of
Milk and Venice Treacle, is confirmed by Facts and
Experience.

Opinionum Commenta delet diu. Natura Judicium confirmat,
SYDENH. RX CICER.

LONDON:

Printed for W. JOHNSTON, in Ludgate-Street; and B. THORNTON,
in Exeter, MDCCLXV.

OBSEVATIONS

III

ON THE

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A PRESENTATION

in which

A Vindication of the Author's Character, as a
Scholar, is attempted.

The Method of doing the Duty of a Physician of
Skill and Virtue is contained by Facts and
Reasons.

Printed and Sold by J. Johnson, in Pall Mall, London.
1781.

LONDON:

Printed by W. Johnston, in Ludgate Street; and by T. Cadell,
in Strand.



OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
STATE of the DISPUTE, &c.

DR. ANDREW, of *Exeter*, having lately published a pamphlet, which he is pleased to entitle, *A State of the Dispute between a Physician and an Apothecary, concerning a Prescription of Sydenham in a Dysentery*; it may not be improper to observe, that the Apothecary was not permitted to have any share in this dispute, except that of proposing some obvious remarks, which occurred to him on reading, in the *Exeter Chronicle* of *August 27, 1762*, the advertisement of an anonymous author, who signs himself *Medicus*.

This particular being intirely omitted in the *State of the Dispute*, after the following paragraph, p. 11. "Here ended the dispute in the newspapers," I beg leave to add, *Because the printer of those papers refused to insert in them the answer to Medicus*!

dicus's reply, which was sent to him by the Apothecary, and which he kept near three weeks, before he returned it.

That Dr. *Andrew* was acquainted with this circumstance by his printer, I won't pretend to say; but he must remember, that the Apothecary informed him of it, and made no scruple of letting him see and read over the answer, which had been sent to his reply, not long after it was returned. With this fact, however, the following words in the *State of the Dispute* do not seem altogether consistent; "And as the Apothecary gave no Answer to my Reply," &c. Possibly it may be said, that this is only meant of an Answer in the news-paper; but supposing the words will admit of being bent to this meaning, the inconsistency, 'tis true, will be avoided; yet it will then necessarily follow, that every reader of the *State of the Dispute*, who, by the plain and obvious sense of these paragraphs, and their connection with what precedes and follows, hath been induced to believe that the Apothecary was either convinced or silenced by the Doctor's Reply, hath been made to believe a falsehood.

But to pass this over. As Dr. *Andrew* has managed matters in his *State of the Dispute*, I find it necessary to recur to his *Advertisement* in the newspapers, which gave rise to it. In the former part of this *Advertisement*, it is affirmed, "That Dr. Swan, in his translation of *Sydenham's Works*, hath committed an egregious mistake, in ordering an ounce and half of Venice treacle in a clyster, Sydenham himself having ordered only half an ounce."

“ounce.” In the latter part of the same *Advertisement*, it is said, that “Dr. *Swan* is only blameable, “in this instance, for following an incorrect copy.” If this last assertion is true, the first, which denies it, must necessarily be false; and it is inconsistent and impossible, that Dr. *Swan* should have committed an egregious mistake in his translation, in that instance, in which he is only blameable for following an incorrect copy. And if, as Dr. *Swan* and Dr. *Baker*, in their letters to Dr. *Andrew*, inform us, in every one of the editions of *Sydenham*’s works, which they have been able to meet with, *Theriac. Androm. sesquiuncia* is prescribed, in a *clyster* for the *Dysentery*; it is certain that Dr. *Swan* is neither guilty (let him confess it himself ever so often) of a mistake in his translation of this prescription, nor blameable for following an incorrect copy. If it should be said that every edition of *Sydenham*’s works is an incorrect copy of his own manuscript, it is answered, That this cannot be proved by such manuscript, none, as we understand by Dr. *Baker*, being any where to be found. As it was impossible, therefore, for the translator to consult it, though the printed editions, in the instance alleged, could be proved incorrect; yet is he not blameable for following an incorrect copy, because he had it not in his power to follow any other; and for not having done what was out of his power to do, no man certainly is blameable.

Besides this, it appears to be very rashly asserted in the *Advertisement*, That *Sydenham* himself ordered only half an ounce of *Theriaca* in his *clyster*; for the

authorities of all the copies of *Sydenham's* works, any where to be found, are acknowledged to be against it ; so that if it could be demonstrated by experiments, that an *ounce and half of Theriaca* is an enormous and intolerable dose ; and consequently, that an experienced and judicious physician did not prescribe it ; yet it would not be possible to ascertain from hence the exact and precise dose which was prescribed by him ; since it might be *half an ounce*, as *Dr. Andrew* affirms it was ; or a *drachm and half*, as *Dr. Swan* believes, (nothing being more manifest in his opinion, than that this quantity was intended) or any other tolerable quantity any person else might conjecture. For these reasons 'tis impossible to prove, but from *Sydenham's* authority only, the precise quantity he gave.

We are, indeed, told, in the *State of the Dispute*, p. 10. " That *Dr. Allen* asserts expressly, that *Sydenham* ordered *only half an ounce* ;" and again, p. 20. " That *Dr. Brookes*, as well as *Dr. Allen* of *Bridgewater*, expressly declares *only half an ounce of Venice treacle* was ordered in a clyster by *Sydenham*." If the testimonies of *Dr. Allen* and *Dr. Brookes* were delivered in these very words, as there is not the least ground to imagine they had any authority but *Sydenham's* printed works, to inform them in this particular, they are, for the reasons above-mentioned, no evidence at all.

Dr. Allen, I find, in *cap. vi. art. 34.* of his *Synopsis*, where he gives the cure of the dysentery extracted from *Sydenham's* works, has this prescription—
" Injiciatur Enema ex Lacte vaccini. et Theriac.

" An-

"Androm. 33." And I can't find any thing else in Dr. *Allen's Synopsis* about this clyster; (the other *Synoptical Writer*, his transcriber, I have not consulted;) yet I can hardly persuade myself, but somewhat more must have been said about it by Dr. *Allen*, in some other place, which has escaped my search: for surely Dr. *Andrew* would not have so roundly asserted what he has in his *Advertisement*, published in the news-papers, without having a better authority to support it. If he has not, his reasoning proceeds thus: In all the editions of *Sydenham's* works, *an ounce and half of Theriaca* is ordered in a clyster for the *dysentery*; but in an extract made from these works, by a late author, and which is transcribed from him by another, his copier, *half an ounce of Theriaca* is ordered—Therefore *Sydenham* himself ordered only *half an ounce*.

There is reason to think, that, when Dr. *Andrew* printed his *Advertisement* in the news-papers, he had not an opportunity of consulting the editions of *Sydenham's* works published by himself, or by his directions; and that taking the prescription he met with in *Allen's Synopsis* to be a true copy of that author's, especially as, in his judgment, *half an ounce of Theriaca* is a full dose, he concluded from hence, that there must be a mistake in Dr. *Swan's* translation; and even after he found that his translation agreed with the *Leyden edition*, he still persisted in his former opinion, and apprehended this to be an incorrect copy of *Sydenham's* own edition. But whether this conjecture be true or not, the preceding conclusions are not at all affected by it.

Before

Before I proceed to some other remarks I have to make on the *Advertisment*, it may not be amiss to take notice of a *supposition* I meet with in the *Reply to an Apothecary*, from which very decisive consequences are pretended to be drawn. This is contained in the following paragraph, p. 9. “As Sydenham did not write any of his works in *Latin*, you cannot believe that he either writ *sesquiuncia*, or *semuncia*, much less can you believe that, at any time, he corrected the press.” The *supposition* that this author was incapable of writing *Latin* and of correcting the press, when any of his works were printed, appears to be supported only by a report, handed down by tradition, and recorded by Dr. Swan, in his *Life of Sydenham*, who, in the preceding page, has made this reflection, “That such reports should be confidently spread even among the contemporaries of the author to whom they relate, and obtain in a few years such credit, as to require a regular confutation, is not to be considered without astonishment.”

That a translator of Sydenham's works, and a writer of his *Life*, after making so true and judicious an observation, should be concerned in spreading reports of this kind, is really surprising.

Now Dr. Swan's report is contradicted by a relation, which may possibly appear to deserve as much or more credit than a common story. This relation is, that Sydenham, being informed by one of his acquaintance, that it was the general opinion, that he was obliged to Dr. Mapletost and Mr. Havers for putting his works into *Latin*, took this

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gentleman with him to his house, and shewed him his translation of several pieces of *Cicero* full of rasures and interlineations. He afterwards shewed him a second copy of the same translation, with fewer corrections and amendments, and then a fair copy of the same. After that he laid before him his *Latin translation* of his own *English translation*, and as many different copies of the *Latin* as he had before of the *English*; and told him, that he had been obliged to make so many translations in each language, before he could please himself with his imitation of his author's diction and manner of expression. All these volumes his friend knew to have been written with his own hand. This anecdote was related, as what he had from undoubted authority, and believed to be certainly true, by a late fellow of *Eaton College*, eminent for his skill in classical learning, and who was fellow of *King's*, at or near the time of *Sydenham's* death; and could not repeat, without warm resentment, the report representing *Sydenham* as knowing nothing of *Latin*, whom he esteemed a good *Latin Classic*, and particularly happy in his imitation of *Tully's* stile; and whose practice in making repeated translations of the author proposed to be imitated, he highly approved of, and recommended the same to his scholars: from one of these I have my information, who had his from his master and very particular friend.

Sydenham's recommending *Don Quixote* to *Sir Richard Blackmore*, when he was consulted by him what books he should read to qualify him for the profession

profession of physick, is no reason at all, as Sir *Richard* would fain have it believed, that his adviser himself engaged in practice without any preparatory study, and that he esteemed medical writers of no manner of use to those who designed to follow the same profession; but, if rightly understood, quite the contrary: for a physician, taught by experience, that no man can practise physick as he ought, without having made it his principal study, and the real business of his life, could not better advise a versifier, intent upon writing *heroic romances*, than to amuse himself with reading books in his own way, and not to meddle at all with physick. Nor was it without design, that the reading of *Don Quixote* in particular was recommended to the author of the *Six Epics*; and, had he followed the advice given him, and entered into the true spirit of *Cervantes*, he would not have been so familiarly saluted by his contemporaries with the names of *Quack*, *Cheapside Bard*, *Knight of the Ill-favoured Muse*, and various others of the like kind.

But we have besides to put into our scale; That *Sydenham*, as he informs us himself, was educated at *Oxford*, and on his going there a second time (his progress in academical learning having been interrupted by the civil wars) he applied himself in good earnest to the study of physick, and continued his studies at the university several years, in which time he must chiefly have read *Latin* or *Greek* authors, and thereby become familiarly acquainted with their language—That the manner in which
he

he quotes the classical authors, and supports his sentiments and reflections with their authorities, shews he must have been not a little conversant with them; of which let his *Epistle dedicatory* be a specimen.—That he was a great admirer of *Cicero's* manner of thinking and writing, and very intimately acquainted with him; for this likewise we have his own evidence, in the beginning of his letter to Dr. *Brady*, “*Loquor cum maximo illo dicendi sentiendique magistro, Cicerone meo, sui sæculi, ne dicam universæ hominum naturæ genio.*” Doth not the above-mentioned tradition account for his assuming to himself the credit of the most intimate familiarity with *Tully*? and is not the *Cicerone meo* an expression which exactly tallies with, and confirms, that tradition?—That the style (as I have heard from those who are reputed good judges of composition) is in all *Sydenham's* works uniform, though very singular, and more florid, and oratorical, than is usually met with in medical writers; and such as might be expected from a man of genius, who had carefully studied the Roman orator and philosopher, with a view of imitating his manner of expression.

All these concurrent testimonies being duly considered, and fairly weighed against a *common vague report*, which is itself contradicted by the preceding *authentic anecdote*; let an impartial inquirer after truth determine, whether it is not highly probable, and almost certain, that *Sydenham* was capable of writing his observations in *Latin*; and if he

was capable, whether it is to be doubted that he did write them in that language, in which he desired they should appear.

That he submitted his compositions to the revision and correction of Dr. *Mapletoft* and Mr. *Havers* of *Cambridge*, is not improbable ; and this was full enough to raise, and give credit to, the report, that they put his works into *Latin* for him ; mankind being too much disposed to believe, and favour, any report which reflects disgrace on, or lessens the character of, their adversary or rival ; and too many of the faculty viewed *Sydenham* in this light ; because, by introducing a method of practice very different from the established one, for which they contended, he was regarded by them as a person who was raising his own reputation on the ruin of theirs.

Against a part of what hath been alledged, there may be this one objection made ; That the quotations from the classical writers which occur in *Sydenham's* works, are not his own, but Dr. *Mapletoft's* and Mr. *Havers's* ; and that the passage above transcribed from his letter to Dr. *Brady*, was inserted by one or other of them.—Now let a man of real merit, and of too much honesty to aim at a false character by low and mean artifices, judge if it is conceivable, that a person eminent for his integrity, and who had modesty, candour, and greatness of mind enough to confess his ignorance and mistakes, as *Sydenham* has done, could, to procure for himself the tinsel reputation of being conversant
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with authors which he could not read, and of being skilful in a dead language which he did not understand, join with his friends in an attempt to deceive mankind, by a crafty and fraudulent contrivance, which his intimate acquaintance, who have left us testimonials of the simplicity and probity of his manners, could not but have known, condemned, and despised him for.

I presume, then, that the words at the bottom of the title-page of *Sydenham's* fourth edition of his *Observations on Acute Diseases*, "Editio quarta ab
"authore adhuc vivo auctior et emendatior red-
"dita," are his own, and that he meant by them to acquaint his readers, that this fourth edition was enlarged and corrected by the author, and published in his life-time, under his own inspection, and consequently, that this is a *genuine* edition; as indeed it would be, if it had been printed only by his order and direction: but I apprehend that no edition printed without the author's order or approbation is genuine.

This explication, it is hoped, will suggest a clear and full answer to the puzzling question in the *State of the Dispute*, designed to perplex and confound the *Apothecary*; "You call upon me to produce *the* (please to say *a*) genuine edition of *Sydenham's* works; what do you mean by *the* (*a*) genuine edition? Is the translation of *Sydenham* by *Mapletoft* and *Havers*, or the translation of their translation by *Pecby* and *Swan*, the genuine edition you require of me?"

I am sensible I have been opposing an opinion which doth great honour to Apothecaries: for those who will hold, that Sydenham, who “ may “ undoubtedly be ranked among the best physicians that ever existed since the days of Hippocrates, and whose writings have, been from his “ time the chief guides of physic,” had read so little *Latin*, that he was incapable of writing it; and that all his skill in physic was the result of his own observations and experience, must of all necessity admit, that an apothecary, without the assistance of medical books, may be a very skilful and excellent practitioner; and that those gentlemen, who value themselves upon the superior advantage of a regular education, and are so universally esteemed and respected on this account, have not been taught the precepts, which are their chief guides in curing diseases, by their learned authors and professors; but by a person who learned this art himself, in the same manner as every apothecary’s education gives him an opportunity of learning it.

But, to return from this very long digression to the *Advertisement*; in which is contained this farther assertion, “ That a *clyster* with an *ounce and “ half of Theriaca* (as it contains above nine grains “ of *opium*) if injected daily, might prove destructive of the life it was intended to preserve.”

To this it is replied; That if so sagacious and experienced a physician as Sydenham was, did give this clyster daily, the *supposition* of its being so fatal

tal and pernicious is groundless.—Now in all the editions of Sydenham's *Observations on Acute Diseases*, in which this clyster is ordered in the *dysentery*, the quantity of *Venice treacle* is an ounce and half, and that not written in *characters*, but in words at full length. This authority, therefore, is a very strong proof, that he was used to prescribe that quantity. But this proof is further confirmed, and becomes much stronger, by the same quantity being repeated in his *Processus integri*, as I before remarked, though this is past over in the *State of the Dispute*, as not worth notice. That the force, therefore, of this evidence may more fully appear, it is to be observed, That the *Processus integri*, or Compendium of Sydenham's practice, was not printed by himself, but by one of his particular friends, to whom he lent his manuscript, written with his own hand; the editor's words are—"Sua ipsius manu conscriptum;" so that, in his *Observations on Acute Diseases*, which he communicated to the public, and in the *Compendium of his Practice*, which he drew up for the use of his son, exactly the same quantity of *Tberiaca* is ordered in the clyster.—Was the mistake insisted on so evident and glaring, "That every person, the least versed in pharmacy, nay, even an *Apothecary's Apprentice* could not but, at first view, perceive it;" is it not probable, that the Physician, who published the *Processus integri*, would have discovered it, in reading the *Observations on Acute Diseases*? Or, if he had overlooked it himself (though it may be supposed

posed he read them over more than once) would he not have heard it spoken of by some or other of his medical acquaintance? Could so gross and notorious an error escape the observations and notice of all Sydenham's defamers, of whose repeated insults he could not, with all his patience, forbear complaining, "Contumeliis ac sannis procacissimis cum jusque ardelionis tandem plus satis delassatus?" Would these have let slip the opportunity of attacking his character, by publishing it? Had this been the case (as it must have been, if the effect of *Theriaca*, given in *clysters*, had not then been better known than it seems to be at present) would not his friend have taken effectual care to do him justice, by correcting this mistake in his *Processus integri*, from the authority of his own manuscript, and not have suffered so egregious an error to be absolutely fixed upon him, by its being there again repeated?

But 'tis in vain, I am satisfied, to insist on these authorities, unless the supposed insuperable objection made against them, by the learned and experienced gentlemen who have honoured the *State of the Dispute* with their names, can entirely be removed, which is, "That no constitution can support
 " a clyster which contains near *ten* grains of *opium*,
 " and a large quantity besides, of the most *heating*
 " *ingredients*, for many days running, when, at the
 " same time, twenty-five drops of laudanum are
 " given by the mouth, every eight hours." See
 p. 7. 11. 15. 17.

Against

Against this I must beg leave to oppose the cases in the *London Med. Observations*, before referred to in my letter printed in the news-papers; from which it appears, if facts are to be believed, that *ten, twelve, nay, twenty-four grains of opium* may be safely swallowed *every day, for several days together*: and if in a distemper, whose peculiar symptoms are *convulsions, spasms, and violent pains* of certain muscles, that quantity of *opium* hath been given with very great success; it may reasonably be concluded, that in another distemper, whose peculiar symptoms are *convulsions, spasms, and violent pains* of the intestines, together with a *flux* (which itself counteracts the effects of opiates) a less quantity of *opium* will not “ necessarily be attended with
 “ pernicious consequences, and kill most strong
 “ men in some days.”

With submission, therefore, I apprehend, That my instance is something to the purpose: for if the conclusion is just, the premises being undeniable facts, the *supposition* brought to prove, that *Sydenham's* practice in the instance disputed is misrepresented, must, together with all that is erected on it, have the same fate which always happens to castles built in the air. To which let me add another certain fact, that if *opium* is not fatal, when it begins to be taken in large quantities, the human constitution soon becomes reconciled to it, and some *Turks* (as authors of undoubted credit relate) make a practice of taking *two hundred and forty, nay four hundred and eighty grains, or an ounce, of*
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this drug every day, and cannot live a day, or even half a day, without it : so that what has been said of the continued use of opiates, is a very feeble prop to the conjecture it is designed to support.

Against this it will, I apprehend, be objected, that *five drachms* of *Theriaca*, given in *clyster*, brought on very alarming symptoms. This fact, related by Dr. *Andrew*, is the only one alledged in confirmation of the *opinion* on which the grand objection to *Sydenham's* prescription is wholly founded, and therefore requires to be particularly considered. "I was once (says Dr. *Andrew*, p. 8.) in
 " consultation with two physicians, when *five*
 " *drachms* of *Venice treacle* were ordered in a *clyster*,
 " which (though not *one half* of the dose said to be
 " prescribed by *Sydenham*, and though no other
 " opiate was ordered) occasioned a very violent
 " fever for several hours, and such a *stupor*, as
 " made us apprehend the most fatal consequence."
 In this relation we are not at all acquainted, whether the patient, who suffered so much from a *clyster*, containing *five drachms* of *Theriaca* only, was a man, woman, or child ; nor is there a word mentioned of the distemper, or complaint, it was intended to remove. Will one, or many such loose and imperfect observations as this is, convince any considerate practitioner, that a precept of *Sydenham's* is misrepresented in all the editions of his works ? If the distemper was not a *dysentery*, will it be permitted me to retort, "Your instance is no-
 " thing to the purpose ?" But to allow this case

every advantage that can, with any pretence of reason, be desired for it; I will suppose that some person, in some distemper, had the *clyster* above-mentioned given him to stop an obstinate purging, and that the consequences were as related; but it doth not follow from hence, that the extraordinary *beat* and *stupor* were occasioned by the *heating ingredients*, and *opium* contained in the *Venice treacle*. For any astringent *clyster*, by suddenly stopping or considerably checking an obstinate purging, especially in a feverish habit, might produce the very same effect. And every observer of distempers must have taken notice, that when humours are prevented from discharging themselves by their usual and accustomed outlets, they frequently fall upon some other part, and produce very alarming symptoms. An instance of which, communicated to me by an experienced physician, I shall take the liberty to insert here.

William Northcott, a sailor, aged thirty-nine years, contracted the *dysentery* in the *West Indies*. In the beginning of this distemper his discharges were bloody, but these, after some time, entirely disappeared, and were succeeded by frothy and mucous stools; which were very frequent, and had, together with his pains, wasted him in nine months from the beginning of his disorder, almost to skin and bones. Various remedies having been in vain tried, a *clyster* with milk and *Venice treacle* was injected every night after he was in bed. This lessened his pains and flux, especially in the night,

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but after the next morning, both returned and continued much as usual, till the *clyster* was again repeated, which was commonly retained two or three hours ; it occasioned no uneasiness in his bowels, no increase of heat in his body, no very heavy sleep in the night, nor drowsiness the next morning, nor any other complaint forbidding the remedy to be repeated oftener, which the return of his flux after the morning seemed to require. The *clyster*, therefore, after having been injected once a day, for five days together, was repeated evenings and mornings. In the morning he did not sleep at all after it, nor found himself inclined to sleep, and got up immediately after he had been obliged to discharge it, being ordered to keep it up as long as he could. By the frequent use of this remedy, the flux was much lessened, the pains of the guts very tolerable, and the patient appeared to mend in all respects ; but, after it had been repeated twice a day, for four days successively, he was suddenly seized in the night with a violent difficulty of breathing, which threatened his life. This complaint, however, by the help of proper remedies, was intirely removed in eight hours, or less ; he had never, as he positively affirmed, experienced a like difficulty of breathing before, nor any thing of the kind. The next day but one, the flux being again returned to its former state, the *clyster* was again given, but in the evening only, it being suspected that a too hasty check of the flux might, together with the use of *opium*, have occasioned a sudden repletion of the lungs,

from

from a concourse and expansion of the humours, and this the *asthma*. After the *clyster* had been given three evenings following, the difficulty of breathing again returned in the night, and was again soon removed by proper remedies: It was now taken for granted, that the *asthma* was occasioned by the *Tberiaca clyster*; but as it was possible that the *opium* contained in that composition might, by its peculiar virtue, have considerably contributed to that effect, it was hoped that an astringent *clyster* without *opium* might check the flux, without bringing on the *asthma*. Within a few days, therefore, as much of the bole powder, without *opium*, as was equal to the species contained in the *Tberiaca* before given, was tried. This too lessened the flux, and, after it had been administered three evenings following, was succeeded by the like difficulty of breathing, as the *Tberiaca clyster* had been. Hence it was concluded, that the lessening of the usual discharge, and not any peculiar virtue of the *opium* given in the *clysters*, occasioned the *asthma*. The astringent *clysters*, therefore, were now wholly lain aside, and other medicines given, but to no purpose; for the patient languishing on for several weeks, having now and then some returns of his *asthma*, was at last quite exhausted, and died of the flux.

May I take the liberty to repeat what has been before observed, that in this case *Venice treacle*, given in a *clyster*, though so frequently repeated, was attended with no evident increase of heat, nor mani-

fest sleepiness ; which facts may seem strange and unaccountable, even to physicians, who, not having observed themselves the effects of opiate *clysters* (such practice at present not being very common) have conceived an opinion that *opium*, given in a *clyster*, doth stupify as much as if it had been taken by the mouth.

Thus Dr. *Andrew*, in his *Reply to an Apothecary*, p. 7. estimating nine grains of *opium* injected into the intestines, equivalent to the same quantity taken into the stomach, objects to the Apothecary, “So
“ that what we are to conclude from your remark,
“ is, that *Sydenham* gave to his patients daily what
“ is equivalent to *thirteen grains of opium* ;” *seventy-five* drops of liquid laudanum, supposed equal to *four* grains of *opium*, being ordered to be taken every day, besides nine grains given in the *clyster*. The same prejudice seems to have provoked Dr. *Swan* to exclaim, “ Where is the Apothecary, or
“ Apothecary’s Apprentice even, that would not
“ at first view perceive the error of ordering a
“ *clyster*, containing near *ten grains of opium*, to be
“ given at once, and repeated *subinde* or *pro re nata*, and acquit the judicious author of making so
“ *gross a mistake* ?” and likewise to have prevailed upon Dr. *Baker* to assert ; “ That a *manuscript*,
“ proved to have been written by *Sydenham* him-
“ self, would hardly convince him, that it was his
“ practice to give such a *clyster* every day for
“ weeks :” taking it for granted, that the narcotic medicine, which *Sydenham* says he knew taken
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on by some, for several weeks together, includes the *clyster*.

But experience has taught other practitioners, that *opium* has by no means the same effect given in clysters, as when it is received into the stomach. For where is the Physician, or even *Apothecary*, who would, towards the end of the last stage of a consumption, when, with a hectic fever, and extreme weakness, the breathing is short and difficult, and expectoration almost suppressed, venture to give three grains of solid opium, mixed with very heating ingredients, to stop a *diarrhœa*? And yet we find, that in this case, and in these very circumstances, a *clyster* containing half an ounce of *Venice treacle*; and a drachm of *Venice turpentine*, is ordered to be injected by *Baron Van Swieten*, with this intent: “*Ut dolor et irritatio intestini recti, topico anodyno remedio leniatur.*” *Comment. ad Boerb. Aphor. 12, 13.* And this is really the effect (as experience has taught me) to be expected from a sufficient quantity of *Venice treacle* given in a *clyster*. The reason of this is explained by *Dr. Whytt*’s Experiments, published in the second volume of *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*; by which it is demonstrated, that a solution of *opium*, topically applied to the nerves and their extremities, may, without affecting the brain, or circulating with the blood, deprive those parts to which it is more immediately applied, and likewise, with certain management, the whole body, of sense and motion.—In what Dispensatory or medical

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author is *five, or four, grains of opium* ordered in a common composing draught? But in *Bates's Pharmacopæia*, published by *Fuller*, the *enema opiatum* contains twenty grains of that drug. This *clyster*, in the same *Pharmacopæia*, published by *Skipton*, is called *Enema Dysentericum*, and marked with an asterisk, to denote that it was frequently prescribed by its author. Besides, in every one of the *Theriacal clysters* given to the patient in the flux whose case is above related, there was an *ounce and half* of that electuary. To satisfy any one who may be inclined to doubt of the truth of this, I have permission to say, that this person, when thus treated, was a patient in the *Devon and Exeter* hospital.

To the above I beg leave to add some observations, which have occurred to me in my own practice.—The *dysentery* was epidemical with us last summer, but continued only for a short space of time; it was chiefly confined to the poor, and was so infectious, that, when once it began in a family, there was scarce an instance of a single person escaping who belonged to it. None under my care died of this disorder besides children, and these discharged an amazing quantity of worms upwards and downwards. It answered in general to *Sydenham's* description, except that the heat of the body and preceding cold, usual in fevers, were wanting; and I met with none whose symptoms required bleeding. They had all a quick and low pulse, complained greatly of thirst, and had commonly a foul tongue. Out of many cases I could relate, I shall

shall only select two, to which I gave more than ordinary attention, as, I apprehend, these will be sufficient to answer my purpose.

E. C. a poor woman, about thirty years old, had been ill in the flux about five days before I was sent for; her pains were violent, and her stools frequent and bloody, which made her very pale and languid. Her skin was cold, her pulse quick and low, with an intense thirst. I immediately vomited her with *Ipecacuanha* ℥j. and at night ordered her *Sydenham's clyster*; she retained it near a quarter of an hour, and said it gave her great ease; but some time after, the pains returned with great violence. The next morning I gave her *Ipec.* gr. iij. every six hours, and at night the *clyster* was repeated; and after this was discharged, a bolus of *rhubarb* with *opium*. From this her bloody stools ceased, and the gripes abated. I continued the *Ipecacuanha*, and repeated the *clyster* the third time; after this she mended daily. She took in all, four *rhubarb* boles with *opium* gr. j. which, with the *Ipecacuanha* and *clysters*, were the only medicines given her, till she came down stairs; when, the diarrhoea continuing, *Fuller's Decoct. Fracast.* put a stop to it.

The second was a more remarkable case, and attended with very alarming symptoms, therefore I shall be somewhat more particular.

June 7th, 1764, E. K. aged forty-four, was seized with colical pains; attended with violent sickness and purging; on the 10th I was desired to attend

tend her. She told me she had the *flux*, and imagined she had caught the infection from her child, which she had buried the night before; she discharged pure blood with her stools, which were frequent, and not more than two or three spoonfuls at a time, quite mucous and foetid, always preceded by severe gripes about her navel: her skin was rather cold than warm, pulse quick and low; her tongue was covered with a white mucous slime; she had a nasty taste in her mouth and throat; her complexion was of a pale yellow, and she complained of a great pain across her loins. I immediately vomited her with *Ipecacuanha* ℞j. and at night gave her twenty grains of *rhubarb*, with one grain of *opium*.

11th. *Ipecacuanha* two grains every six hours in a warm bolus with a julep. Bloody stools the same, but the gripes not so bad; she had a very restless night.

12th. *Ipecacuanha* three grains every six hours, and at night the *rhubarb* bolus with *opium*. The purging still continued, and the gripes as bad as ever. The stools were now of a blackish hue, and stunk intolerably.

13th. She appeared to be growing worse, and her pains increased with frequent vomiting; *Sydenham's chyster* was given her: this I prepared myself, and got a skilful person to inject it. She retained it near half an hour; during which time her pains were much abated. With the increased dose of *Ipecacuanha*, she urged frequently to vomit,

sometimes vomited, and what she brought up tasted (as she expressed it) like the smell of her stool, and almost poisoned her; but as she was relieved after every puke, I continued the same quantity of *Ipecacuanba*.

14th. She had a tolerable night, but about eight this morning the gripes returned violently, with frequent hiccups; her stools were dark and bloody, and of a cadaverous smell; she was quite languid and dejected. About ten I repeated the same *clyster*, which came off in about half an hour, without any stool; the symptoms still continuing, or rather increasing, I ordered another *clyster* at eight in the evening, which she retained all night, her pains were greatly lessened, and she slept tolerably well. The *Ipecacuanba* still continued.

15th. About nine this morning the *clyster* was discharged, followed by two or three loose stools, but with little or no pain. In the afternoon she grew worse again, the stools were frequent, free from fresh blood, but mucous, black, and very foetid. She had a restless night.

16th. Her stools were now like yellow bile, and their smell as putrid as ever, but without any tincture of blood; the taste in her mouth excessive bad, and what she vomited was sometimes yellow, and sometimes green; her pulse very languid. The *Ipecacuanba* was now reduced to two grains every six hours. About noon she was taken very sick, and vomited a large lump of putrid bile, which stunk intolerably; and about two hours after a

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quantity

quantity more of the same kind, streaked with blood, attended with violent gripes. At evening I repeated the *clyster*, which she kept up full two hours.

17th. She slept very comfortably last night. I asked if she felt any pain during the time the *clyster* was retained; she said she had not been so easy since her illness, and had but one stool from the time the *clyster* was discharged till ten this morning, when I saw her. This might properly be called stool, from its smell and consistence, and was the first of the kind since her illness. Her gripes had quite left her, though she still complained of sickness, thirst, and ill taste in her mouth. I continued the *Ipecacuanba* every eight hours. She had a very good night.

18th. In the morning she had one very severe gripe, soon followed by a loose stool; on examining it, I saw a large lump of mucus, streaked with blood, unmixed with stool, as much in quantity as the white of a large egg, the rest was intirely yellow excrement. From this time she daily grew better, though the diarrhoea continued many days, even after she got down stairs; which was the general consequence of this flux in all those who fell under my care.

In this patient it is observable that many symptoms seemed to threaten a gangrene.

This *clyster* I have given to many grown people, besides those above specified, as well as to children, in a quantity proportioned to their age, and have observed

observed that in all of them, during the time it was retained, their pains were greatly relieved; and when the violent gripes returned afterwards, they would earnestly beg for another such *clyster*; and I never could perceive any increase of heat, nor any stupor, comatous symptoms, or preternatural drowsiness, from the use of it; but such a sleep only as might be reasonably expected in a miserable person, who had been worn out with pain, and was now restored to a state of ease.

From these observations it is evident, That *opium*, given in a *clyster*, affects the head, and locks up the senses much less, than when taken by the mouth. But though it had equally the same effect, yet might it be safely given in that *quantity* which is held and advertised to be *fatal* and *destructive*. For in obstinate *dysenteries*, Mr. Clegborn found it necessary to increase the quantity of *opium* he gave by the mouth from half a grain, with which he began, to five or six grains, to repeat this *dose* twice a day, and to continue its use for several months together. "From the continuance of which medicine," (to use this author's own words) "in such cases, I have never found any ill effects ensue; on the contrary, I could name many people, who have been obliged to take it in this manner from September to the following June; and, as far as I am able to judge, it is to the *opium* they are chiefly indebted for their lives, and the perfect health they at present enjoy." *Clegborn's Observations on the Diseases in Minorca*, chap. 5.

Upon the whole, then, *Sydenham's clyster*, frequently repeated in the *dysentery* of some continuance, seems to me (if I may take the liberty to give my opinion of it) an exceeding valuable remedy: for by taking off the irritation, and easing the pains of the lower intestines, it gives the patient some respite from his most grievous torments, and procures him some intervals of rest. These alone are considerations of great moment; but its consequences do not terminate here; these intervals of ease and rest permitting him to recruit his strength, and enabling him the better to bear his disorder, as well as the evacuations necessary to eradicate it. Nor is this all; for in most of those who have been dissected, after dying of the *dysentery*, the lower intestines (which we now know to be the principal seat of this distemper in its advanced state) have been found either mortified, or disposed to a mortification; and *Venice treacle*, topically applied, is recommended by *Sydenham* as a most effectual remedy against that accident, and has been, and still is, successfully used by practitioners in the same case. Such a remedy, therefore, which is immediately applied to the parts principally affected in an inveterate *dysentery*, cannot but be of the greatest service in preventing or curing that accident which is so frequent, and so fatal, in this disease.

The publication of the *State of the Dispute*, after its author had been properly informed, that a *clyster*, with an ounce and half of *Tberiac*, had been repeatedly and safely given in a *flux*, laid me under an obligation

obligation of making these observations public, lest practitioners, overawed by the authority of great names, should be deterred from having recourse to a remedy, by which I think the lives of many may be saved, when the more common methods of practice have been tried without the desired success; and this I have to plead in excuse for myself to those learned and experienced gentlemen concerned in this dispute, for presuming to oppose their authority in a single instance of practice.

AN APOTHECARY.

MUSEUM
BRITAN

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

ТАЛАНТОВ